

REMARKS

This application pertains to a novel pressure-sensitive adhesive article.

Claims 1-15 are pending, although claims 3 and 7 have been withdrawn as directed to a non-elected invention. The claims under examination are therefore claims 1, 2, 4-6 and 8-15.

Applicants respectfully request that, upon the allowance of claims drawn to elected subject matter, the non-elected claims be rejoined.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite specific glass transition temperature ranges for polymer blocks P(A) and P(B). Support can be found in the paragraph bridging pages 7 and 8. Claim 1 has also been amended to recite that the hard polymer blocks form regions of the coating which are non-adhesive and the soft polymer blocks form regions of the coating which are adhesive. Support can be found at page 3, lines 13-25.

Claims 1, 2, 8, 9 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or in the alternative as obvious over JP 10-025460 [machine translation], and evidenced by what the Examiner refers to as "Applicants' admissions".

The pressure-sensitive adhesive article of Applicants' claims is comprised of a support in sheet or strip form, at least a part of which is coated with a pressure-sensitive

adhesive comprised of a polyacrylate block copolymer having both hard blocks [P(B)] and soft blocks [P(A)], wherein the soft blocks and the hard blocks are immiscible and the soft blocks form regions of the coating which are adhesive and the hard blocks form regions of the coating which are non-adhesive.

Since the blocks are immiscible with each other, the weak blocks function as an inner softener for the hard blocks, and the properties of the adhesive can be adjusted in a very fine way.

The adhesives used in Applicants' self-adhesive articles generate an organizational structure in which the hard domains form small regions which are non-adhesive, and the soft domains give rise to very small adhesive regions (page 3, lines 13-29). This results in the relatively low bond strength and redetachability needed for sticky notes.

Applicants' adhesive coating therefore has areas which are non-adhesive and areas which are adhesive. This is different than a substrate which is partially coated with an adhesive, and partially uncoated, and therefore has adhesive coated regions which are, of course, adhesive and regions which are not adhesive coated and therefore are not adhesive.

Nothing in the JP reference teaches or suggests an adhesive which, when coated on a substrate, forms a coating that has regions which are non-adhesive as well as regions which are adhesive. In particular, there is absolutely no hint in the JP

reference which would lead those skilled in the art to choose monomers which are immiscible with each other. By contrast, the JP reference is concerned with obtaining a strong adhesive, and this would lead those skilled in the art away from the use of Applicants' inner softener aspect, even if those reading the JP reference were aware of such a concept.

The JP reference would, if anything, teach away from Applicants' novel adhesive coating. Paragraph [0010] of the reference plainly discloses that the object of the reference is to provide an acrylic binder that has excellent adhesiveness. This is exactly the opposite of the requirements for Applicants' adhesive, which must have a low bond strength in order to be useful for sticky notes. The presence of the domains in Applicants' adhesive coating which are non-adhesive is directly contrary to the teachings of the JP reference, which is directed towards stronger adhesives, not weaker adhesives.

The adhesives of the JP reference would not be useful for sticky pads, because they, or the sheets of paper from the sticky pads made with them, would adhere to paper too strongly to be useful as note sheets that are easily removable from the papers to which they are attached, without harm.

Accordingly, the JP reference neither anticipates nor suggests Applicants' claims, and the rejection of claims 1, 2, 8, 9 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or obvious over JP 10-025460 machine translation should now be withdrawn.

Claims 4, 5, 6, 10 and 12-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over JP 10-025460 [machine translation] and evidenced by what the Examiner refers to as "Applicants' admission".

The differences between Applicants' pressure sensitive adhesive article and anything that can be found in the JP reference are discussed above. For claims 4, 5 and 10 the Examiner contends that the use of release layers and adhesion promoting layers are common and well known, and that it would be obvious to incorporate such layers in adhesive sheets formed from the adhesives of the JP reference. Of course, no release layers or adhesion promoting layers could ever overcome the differences between Applicants pressure-sensitive article and anything that can be found in the JP reference, as discussed above. Simply incorporating such layers into the adhesives of the JP reference could never lead to Applicants' novel pressure-sensitive adhesive articles.

For claims 6 and 12-15, the Examiner contends that providing a plurality of adhesive sheets in the form of a pad of conveniently predetermined size is common and well known. The Examiner has not provided any evidence whatsoever to support this contention, however. Moreover, no plurality of adhesive sheets in the form of a pad could possibly overcome the differences discussed above between Applicants' novel pressure-sensitive adhesive article and anything that could be derived from the JP reference. Applicants' claims cannot therefore be seen as obvious over the JP reference and the so-called admission of Applicants.

The rejection of claims 4, 5, 6, 10 and 12-15 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over JP 10-025460 [machine translation] and evidenced by what the Examiner refers to as "Applicants' admission" should therefore now be withdrawn.

In view of the present amendments and remarks it is believed that claims 1-15 are now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of said claims by the Examiner is respectfully requested and the allowance thereof is courteously solicited.

CONDITIONAL PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME

If any extension of time for this response is required, Applicant requests that this be considered a petition therefor. Please charge the required petition fee to Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

ADDITIONAL FEE

Please charge any insufficiency of fee or credit any excess to Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

Respectfully submitted,
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